ERRATA

Page 9, paragraph one, second sentence to read

It would be helpful if WHD committees identified and informed Habitat **not later than 22 July 1994** of individuals, projects, organizations and NGOs that merit a Habitat Scroll of Honour Award for having actively demonstrated the efforts made by the poor and improving the conditions in human settlements.

Page 9, line 24

For representations **read** representatives

Page 12, line 10

For Habitat **read** UNCHS (Habitat)

Page 15, lines 10-12 to read

was the Under-Secretary-General in charge of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Ms

Page 21, line 13

For calls were for a regional **read** calls for regional

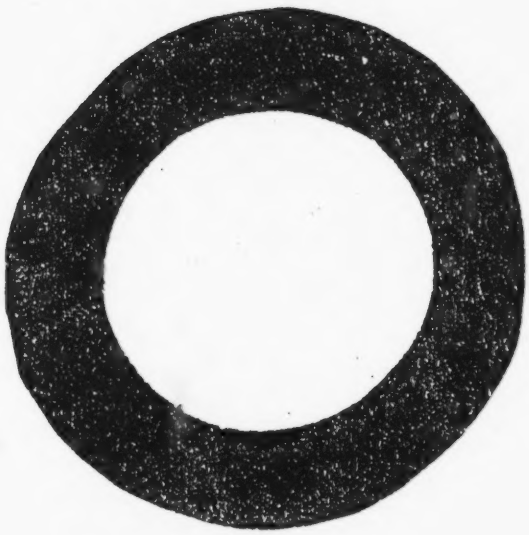
Page 21, line 29

World HABITAT Day

Monday 3 October 1994

HOME AND THE FAMILY

UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Habitat)



FOREWORD

The home is where a child is nurtured, where a family finds security and shelter from the natural elements and the larger community or society. It is in the home that the traditions and culture of that community or society are passed on to the next generations. As the family is the smallest and most essential social unit, the home is the most basic spatial location for the family to survive in. Each individual will prosper or suffer according to his or her sense of belonging to a family and of having a place to call home.

It is indeed ironic that in this world where we have conquered the challenges of space, and where we have developed the most remarkable technologies to overcome so many physical limitations, we have not yet been able to ensure that every child has a chance to start out in life with a family that is stable, loving and capable of achieving the adequate livelihood that enables it to occupy a decent home. Whilst it is very likely that today more people than ever before enjoy just that situation, it is also true that almost one fifth of the world's population is born into a world where that is not available.

In the developing countries - home to the vast majority of the world's poor - the rural and urban poor are confronting shrinking horizons of economic opportunity as well as deteriorating living conditions. They have to live in primitive shelters without access to safe water supply and basic sanitation. In urban areas they live in crowded settlements where diseases like tuberculosis, influenza and meningitis spread rapidly, often helped by the low disease-resistance amongst under-nourished residents. Perhaps the most depressing outcome, after the high infant mortality rates and low life expectancies, is the fracturing of families that results in children being left homeless at the mercy of the streets.

The problem is not just confined to the developing world. Though the poor in rapidly urbanizing countries live in physical conditions that are extremely deleterious and hazardous to their health, still they are often able to enjoy the benefits of family and community relationships, shared values and world views that have not been entirely seriously eroded by modernization and the materialism that all too often accompanies it. In other words the psychological deprivation and social alienation so apparent in the richer countries is no less an obstacle to the ideal of healthy homes and happy families than the sheer economic hardships and environmental degradation in the poorer countries.

This year the first Preparatory Committee meeting for Habitat II will be held in Geneva. This is the beginning of a global participatory effort to take stock of the demographic, economic and environmental trends that are together transforming rural life and generating the unprecedented formation and growth of deterioration in human settlements in an urbanizing world, and to chart a course of sustainable recovery that can ensure homes for all in prosperous and more humane settlements into the 21st century.

In view of the vital need to create awareness of the crucial role each family can play in contributing to the settlement of their own and their neighbours' living environment and in view of 1994 being designated as the International Year of the Family, Habitat has chosen "Home and the Family" as the theme for this year's World Habitat Day.

Elizabeth Dowdeswell
Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

World Habitat Day

World Habitat Day is an international event which gives the community of states the chance to share not only experiences from their successful initiatives but also the distinct problems they have encountered in trying to provide proper infrastructures for adequate shelter during the year.

General Assembly resolution 40/202A of 17 December 1985 designated the first Monday of October every year as World Habitat Day, a day first marked by the international community in 1986. World Habitat Day is an occasion to remember the homeless and those with inadequate shelter, including those whose housing conditions are incompatible with their human status, as they seek ways and means of improving their shelter and neighbourhoods.

The day's activities are meant to rekindle our resolve and renew our energies in ensuring adequate shelter for all. At the international level, one of the key activities of the day is the presentation of the year's Habitat Scroll of Honour and World Habitat Awards.

At the national level, various activities are organized by the public and private sectors. Seminars, symposia and rallies are held. Competitions on housing-related posters are conducted. Essay competitions on shelter are held in schools. Radio, television and newspapers are used to highlight the shelter situation and so on.

The right to adequate housing for all is the cornerstone of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. People need decent shelter and the quality of the shelter is a key determinant of their health, productivity and well-being.

This year World Habitat Day presents the opportunity to focus on the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (better known as "Habitat II") to be held in June 1996 and the activities undertaken by governments, NGOs, and the private sector in preparation for the Conference.

The World Habitat Day theme: Home and the Family

Habitat recognizes the central part the family plays in development and, in particular in the provision of shelter. It is because the concept "Home and the Family" motivates each family that UNCHS (Habitat) has chosen it as the theme for highlighting the contribution of the individual unit in any given community. The theme is expected to highlight the plight of the poor. A family without a proper home can never hope to realize its full potential. Homelessness leads to stunted growth and a shortened lifespan. So there is a need to enable the poor to change their lives, thereby ensuring healthier and happier families.

Improved living conditions are vital to enable individual families to participate in the development of their societies. Local community support is necessary for meaningful change to occur. Starting from humble beginnings, helping one family can make a significant impact on homelessness in a particular community. Once families are convinced that a project is for their immediate and direct benefit they are ready to contribute financially and even volunteer their labour to improving their own living environment. Habitat-funded projects directed at families have shown a high rate of success.

The Habitat/Danida Community Development Programme has been specifically designated as the Centre's contribution to the International Year of the Family. The Community Development Programme clearly demonstrates that poor families can play a major role in improving their living conditions by organizing themselves and by assuming power and responsibility. Through individual and group participation, poor families can influence the direction of government programmes and determine the course of development programmes.

A decent home should be secure and protect the occupants from the elements. It should have access to safe drinking water, fuel and proper disposal of waste, and to employment, health, education and recreation. Improved family living conditions mean an easier load for women. A better living environment means a healthier and more comfortable family. More space in the house means that there is privacy. All of this encourages a family unit to stick together. A home with the basic amenities encourages the family to spend more time together. Adequate shelter then frees the family from daily drudgery thanks to a proper infrastructure.

As part of improving the status of every family, specific strategies should be made to improve the living conditions of women. UNCHS (Habitat) strives to promote the role of women as vital to meaningful change. World Habitat Day focuses attention on the home since people's living conditions determine, to a great extent, their health, productivity, identity and wellbeing.

World Habitat Day - Themes of previous years

1986 Shelter is My Right

1987 Shelter for the Homeless

1988 Shelter and the Community

1989 Shelter, Health and the Family

1990 Shelter and Urbanization

1991 Shelter and the Living Environment

1992 Shelter and Sustainable Development

1993 Women and Shelter Development

1994 Home and the Family

Guidelines for World Habitat Day 1994: Home and the Family

ORGANIZATION

World Habitat Day activities should take place at the national as well as state/provincial and local/municipal levels. It is proposed that countries establish city, state or provincial and local sub-committees to organize events. This should enable a local or neighbourhood focus and thus generate a wide range of activities.

Suggestions for World Habitat Day in 1994

- Governments might use the mass media, in particular, television and radio, to draw attention to this year's World Habitat Day (WHD) activities. This can be achieved through short video and audio spots which indicate the date and theme of this year's WHD. Posters can also be an effective medium for creating awareness of the event and its theme. An important consideration is that posters must be imaginative and attractive and distributed widely in a timely manner if they are to make an impact on public consciousness.

- Relevant government agencies may wish to place a series of articles in the press that highlight the central role of the family in shelter development. Alternatively or additionally, they could initiate radio and television panel programmes which bring national leaders and journalists together to discuss the integration of the family as a unit in the community planning, implementation and evaluation of shelter policies and projects.

- Another possibility at the national level is to commission a video documentary on the theme "Home and the Family" which could be used later for training by the local authorities and communities involved in shelter construction.

- World Habitat Day could be used by governments, local authorities and NGOs to demonstrate tangible improvements in the shelter conditions of the poor and disadvantaged, particularly upgrading activities in slums and squatter settlements. This could be done by highlighting issues through exhibitions and television and radio programmes.

- Local committees should identify, publicize and reward the self-help activities of communities in which individual families have played a central role in initiating and implementing shelter-related upgrading

activities which visibly improve the living conditions of the inhabitants. The activities could vary from providing water and sanitation to constructing a community centre, access roads, clinics or low-cost houses, as well as demonstrating individual family involvement in the decision-making process in carrying out such activities.

- University faculties, such as those concerned with architecture, housing, planning, engineering and social studies, could be encouraged to organize seminars and workshops on the theme or on relevant sub-themes. Special emphasis could be given to the "role of the individual family units in shelter development" or "the integration of beneficiaries in human settlement decision-making process".

- World Habitat Day's focal point might wish to interest foreign cultural organizations, e.g., the British Council, Goethe-Institut and the French Cultural Centre, among others, in organizing exhibitions and discussions on the theme. Comparisons might be made on participation by less powerful groups, such as tenants, women and the very poor, and the problems they encounter in securing homes in developed countries and in developing countries.

- Competitions might be organized for students in the field of architecture or design of low-cost housing projects where residents' involvement is central to planning, implementation, and evaluation, as well as to shelter project management. One could give examples of housing projects which have incorporated the wishes of the beneficiaries. Two good examples are the Dandora site-and-service scheme in Nairobi and upgrading programmes of the late 1970s and early 1980s in Lusaka.

- Research and technical institutions in the public and private sectors could be encouraged to hold exhibitions and disseminate information on the role of beneficiaries in local community activities and their positive impact on the planning and building of homes to suit their needs.

- As households worldwide generate hundreds of thousands of tons of solid waste a day, there is an urgent need to develop rational attitudes conducive to waste recycling and safe disposal. Government information campaigns, together with innovations in waste management, could be initiated in connection with WHD. The experiences gained from recycling solid waste should be used as an opportunity for raising community awareness as well as facilitating

the creation of income-generating activities, particularly for needy families.

- The role played by families as members of communities in managing cities, towns and villages should be highlighted through discussions and exhibitions. The contribution local communities can make to the efficient management of cities can only be consolidated through participation by the individual family. This might be the day on which each family in the neighbourhood can do something tangible like clearing garbage and disposing of it appropriately.

- In activities at primary and secondary schools, children should take part in essay and painting competitions on life in their particular settlements. The essays should reflect the role of their parents in daily life in their settlements. Schoolchildren could be briefed on ways of easing women's burdens as a step towards a better managed home.

- The ministry responsible for public information could organize video, radio and television competitions based on this year's theme.

- Information and essential data indicating alternate specific solutions could be made available through the media and NGOs. The media not only spread information, but also foster commitment. They provide a "growing coalition" of forces in support of the enabling approach to providing a decent home.

- Recreational and entertainment activities, e.g., football matches and concerts, could be organized and the proceeds used to help construct or upgrade existing houses and facilities.

To allow for international dissemination of information on the activities of World Habitat Day and to profit from ideas from all countries, it is important that UNCHS (Habitat) be supplied with a brief report by 11 November 1994, of those activities.

SPECIAL HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AWARDS

UNCHS (Habitat) initiated the Habitat Scroll of Honour awards in 1989 to honour and encourage individuals and organizations making outstanding contributions to the cause of shelter for the poor and the improvement of human settlement conditions around the world. It would be most helpful if WHD committees identified and informed Habitat **not later than 22 July 1994**, of individuals, projects, organizations and NGOs that have actively demonstrated their commitment to augmenting the efforts made by the poor and to improve the conditions in human settlements that deserve being considered to receive a Habitat Scroll of Honour Award.

Support From Habitat

To support World Habitat Day activities at the national level, UNCHS (Habitat) will make available information material on human settlements with special emphasis on the theme. The material will be sent to World Habitat Day focal point committees for distribution to the Press and other interested groups. Data on national activities could be used to supplement this information. Copies of the material will be sent to United Nations Information Centres (UNICs), other United Nations bodies, international agencies, resident representatives/coordinators of the United Nations Development Programme, Habitat regional information offices, diplomatic representations and national Habitat focal points.

In consultation with the United Nations Department of Public Information and UNICs, Habitat undertakes to support national press conferences and produce information material for national and international use.

HABITAT SCROLL OF HONOUR

For outstanding contribution to human settlements development

1. The 1994 awards will be given to individuals, organizations, NGOs and projects which have actively worked to overcome the obstacles against each household's full participation at all levels in the human settlements development process. The awards consist of an engraved plaque with a citation of the innovative contribution of the award winner.

2. **Selection criteria**

Nominations are invited for individuals, governments, private-sector institutions and NGOs whose achievements in human settlements developed through a project or individual effort have:

- Successfully dealt with the provision of adequate shelter and/or services to the poor through an innovative approach replicable internationally;
- Succeeded in bringing to public notice human settlements issues and mobilizing international support;
- Succeeded in mobilizing local or national action towards finding solutions to problems in human settlements;
- Contributed significantly to the intellectual, scientific or theoretical approaches to human settlement development.

3. **Areas of activities and accomplishments:**

Note: Subjects suggested include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Slums and squatter-settlement upgrading projects;

2. Alternative solutions to eviction;

3. Innovative land tenure systems;

4. Innovative financial mechanisms for low-income groups, e.g; housing cooperatives;

5. Provision of shelter for the homeless and poorest sectors of society;

6. Research into, and development of, indigenous building materials;

7. Design and construction of affordable housing for the poor;

8. Innovative building codes and regulations:

9. Assistance and promotion of the informal sector;

10. Development of the construction sector;

11. Promotion of entrepreneurs of small-scale building materials;

12. Training programmes for youth for occupation in the construction sector;

13. Provision of transport facilities to low-income groups;

14. Efficient management of city services (i.e., waste collection and disposal);

15. Effective management training for local authorities.

4. Copyright

It is agreed and understood that the following terms and conditions will apply to these awards:

1. The prize for the winning entry will be awarded to the person or organization named in the submission form who may not necessarily be the holder of the copyright.

2. All entries will be available for international exhibition, demonstration, publication and media coverage and Habitat will not be required to seek further permission from the copyright holder for any such use.

3. Where the submission of a project is made by someone other than the holder of the copyright, a written warranty is required indicating that the holder of the copyright agrees (a) to the submission; and (b) to the terms indicated in 1 and 2 of this section.

5. Responsibilities

The sponsors of prize-winning projects will be expected to make a brief (no more than a 15-minute) presentation on the projects on World HABITAT Day on 3 October 1994.

Habitat Scroll of Honour

List of Recipients

1989

1. Otto Koenigsberger
2. Hassan Fathy
3. Lauchlin Currie
4. Habitat for Humanity

1990

1. Lord Scarman
2. Tangshe Municipal Government, China
3. Construyamos, Colombia
4. CRATerre, France
5. Stone Town, United Republic of Tanzania
6. Human Settlements Foundation, Thailand

1991

1. Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements, Costa Rica
2. Urban Development Authority, Singapore
3. Cooperative Housing Foundation, United States of America
4. National Housing Development Authority, Sri Lanka
5. Housing Development Finance Corporation, India
6. Housing and Urban Development Co-operation, India
7. Sengki Land-sharing Project, Thailand
8. Project Assistance à l'ECOSAT, Burundi
9. Institute for Building Materials, Viet Nam
10. Sen. Tamako Nakanishi, Japan
11. Arch. Leonardo Quintana Uranga, Venezuela

1992

1. Intermediate Technology Development Group, United Kingdom
2. Shenzhen Construction Bureau, China
3. Habitat International Coalition, Mexico
4. East Wehdat Upgrading Project, Jordan
5. Earthquake Emergency Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Programme, Nepal
6. Rural Housing Reconstruction with Appropriate Technologies, Ecuador,
7. Namuwongo Upgrading and Low-Cost Housing, Uganda
8. New Urban Communities in Egypt
9. World Relief El Salvador Housing Reconstruction Project, El Salvador
10. Woodless Construction Project, Niger
11. Mr Laurie Baker
12. Mr Yona Friedman

13. Mayor Jaime Lerner, Curitiba, Brazil
14. Mr Rozanov Evgueni Grigorievich
15. Mr John F.C. Turner

1993

1. Cités Unies Developpement, France
2. Build-Together Programme, Namibia
3. Anthony William Bullard, United Kingdom

THE WORLD OBSERVANCE: WORLD HABITAT DAY:

World Habitat Day, celebrated throughout the world on the first Monday of October, every year, was last year celebrated with due ceremony at the United Nations Headquarters, New York.

Activities at the United Nations Headquarters were highlighted by a full-day programme chaired by the President of the General Assembly, Samuel R.H. Insanally. Also present was the Under-Secretary-General in - charge - of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Ms Elizabeth Dowdeswell, who, apart from her speech, read a message from the Secretary-General, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. One of the highlights of the day was the presentation of the 1992 World Habitat Awards and the 1993 Habitat Scroll of Honour awards.

The theme of last year's World Habitat Day was "Women in Shelter Development". It highlighted the plight of millions of women living in communities without basic housing amenities and services, the plight of women who, despite the fact that they have the final say in one third of the world's households, have no access to human settlement resources, such as property and finance, training and appropriate technology.

Since 1985, UNCHS (Habitat) armed with decisions of the Commission on Human Settlements and the General

Assembly has stressed the importance of improving the status of women, enabling them to take a more active part in the human settlements process as a whole and incorporating gender issues into the entire programme.

In his message, Dr. Boutros-Ghali asked governments to take into account women's contribution and support as the essential factors in improving homes and communities.

The World Habitat Awards and Habitat Scrolls of Honour recognize the efforts of those men and women who combine creative imagination and a sense of vocation to improve the quality of life in communities around the world. The awards reflect the essential focus of Habitat's work - grappling with challenges, arising from natural and other causes which human settlements face. The World Habitat Awards were initiated by the Building and Social Housing Foundation, a British NGO.

Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Habitat and UNEP's Under-Secretary-General, presented the Habitat Scrolls of Honour. The winners were :

1. Cités Unies Développement, France; a network encompassing cities in the North and South, which has provided a model for decentralized cooperation through partnerships.

2. Build-Together Programme, Namibia; a project empowering communities with a full decision-making mandate to develop their neighbourhoods, through involvement by local governments.

3. Anthony William Bullard, United Kingdom; for assisting the people of Afghanistan to rebuild their lives in their war-torn country. The award was given in Mr.Bullard's memory and that of all dedicated people who have lost their lives in war and strife.

EAST WEHDAT - JORDAN

Project receipient of the 1992 Habitat Scroll of Honour Award

East Wehdat, an upgrading settlement located east of Amman, is a beneficiary-oriented project. The upgrading programme comprises regularization of tenure, construction of streets, utilities and sanitary cores in selected plots, loans for buying plots and house construction, and provision of a community and vocational centre for women, a clinic, a library, shops and workshops benefiting 7000 people in 530 units.

The programme, financed by the World Bank, has motivated the beneficiaries to construct their own houses within a short span of time and become more concerned with development options for their community. The programme was initiated in 1980 and completed in 1984. In 1992, the project was awarded two prizes, the Habitat Scroll of Honour and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, for its outstanding contribution to architecture for Muslims.

There is a strong link between the health of infants and children and improved environment. During the implementation of the East Wehdat project, the Urban Development Department conducted two main studies, a 1981 baseline study and a 1985 follow-up study. The studies established that children's community health improved due to the improved environment conditions created by new housing and the provision of a new infrastructure.

In 1992, a reassessment study was conducted to assess the adequacy of development standards design and operational strategies that encourage the participation of beneficiaries. The results showed a dramatic improvement in the physical and social environment. Everyone had a role to play and the majority of the inhabitants played their part and even proposed with new ideas. Residents repaired paths, with men and women discharging different tasks which were socially acceptable to the community.

Apart from easing home congestion, a sense of wellbeing seemed to permeate the settlement and the residents were more productive through their businesses and more sensitive to community issues. Overcrowding declined from an average of 4.7 persons a room in 1981 to 3.0 in 1990 as the average number of rooms for every household almost doubled from 1.5 in 1981 to 2.7 in 1990. The families which indicated that they wanted to move out of their community had a higher than average income level, indicating rising housing expectations rather than affordability, as traditionally assumed.

Community facilities and a library were of special use to girls aged between 7 and 11, who due to their Muslim beliefs, are normally not allowed to play in public. Girls used the facilities more than boys. The green areas were fenced off and taken care of as private property. Residents also took special care to clean the public space in front of their plots. Everyone had a role to play; children took garbage to the dumps and helped clean up the footpaths.

More than half of the people used the health centre on a monthly basis, while the rate of illiteracy residents fell from 14.8 per cent in 1985 to 9.8 per cent in 1990.

COSTA RICA BAMBOO PROJECT

Project receipient of the 1991 Habitat Scroll of Honour Award

Costa Rica's utilization of bamboo in social housing construction is very successful. One third of the population is expected to benefit yearly from the bamboo project, by the end of next year. The project is so practical that the Government of Costa Rica has integrated the bamboo project into its housing development strategy.

Started in 1990 with the assistance of the Government of the Netherlands, UNCHS (Habitat) and UNDP, the project is not only creating housing, but is also making a significant contribution to the integration of lower-income organized groups into Costa Rica's productive system, generating new jobs and incentives for better use of local natural resources.

Decent housing was beyond the reach of the low-income sector of the population due to the high cost of conventional materials, little if any economic activity in the rural areas and rapid depletion of forests. This project seeks to address all these anomalies.

The bamboo project, apart from creating housing is also a disaster-mitigation strategy. Bamboo has excellent anti-seismic characteristics. When, tragically, a powerful earthquake struck the coast of Costa Rica on 22 April 1991, causing widespread devastation and virtually total destruction of housing, the 30 units built by the project in the affected area survived the damage. Following that experience, the project became very popular, and calls were for a regional dissemination of the experience in seismic-prone areas grew.

The project has embarked not only on the construction of houses, but has set aside large tracts of public land for bamboo cultivation and industrial production, and has earmarked funds for credit, through the Housing and Mortgage Bank. Costa Rica has a supportive housing programme, but still needs to bridge the affordability gap to ensure lower-income groups' access to decent housing and services.

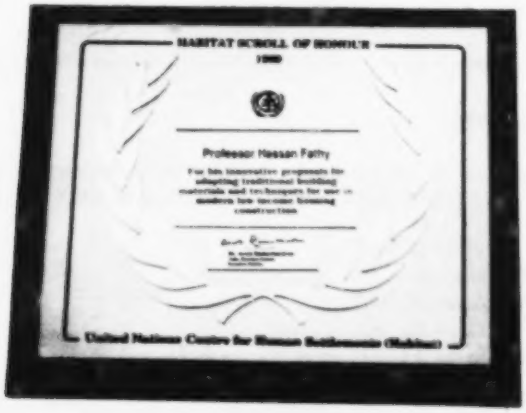
There had been a very high rate of deforestation in the country. Re-afforestation with bamboo is expected to allow the construction of 7000 houses each year from 1995. Apart from creating housing, the project is making a significant contribution to the integration of lower-income organized groups into the country's productive system, generating new jobs and incentives for better use of local natural resources. The project has trained over 1000 people - both technicians and family heads of families.

Bamboo displays great mechanical resistance, which makes it ideal as a building material in regions of high seismic risk. An easy and flexible material to use - anyone can work with it - it is attractive to women and community-based organizations. Again large-scale cultivation in the rural areas is not only creating employment but also reducing the use of wood for housing construction and, thereby, limiting severe environmental degradation.

UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Habitat)
PO Box 30030 Nairobi, KENYA. Telephone 621234
Cable UNHABITAT; FAX (254)-2-624266/624267; Telex:22996 UNHAB KE

UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Habitat)

HABITAT SCROLL OF HONOUR



Award for outstanding contributions towards human settlements development through implementation of a successful project.

1994 Nomination form for **PROJECTS**

Name of project:

Name of individual in charge of project:

Name of the organization:

Personal address:

Telephone:

Organization's address:

Telephone:

Telefax: Telex:

Full cable address:

Action Area(s) of Human Settlements Development:
(*See list of categories in attached selection criteria*)

Human Settlements Achievement(s)

1. Please attach a summary of about 300 words on a single sheet of A4-paper, including dates and places of achievement(s) and activities. It should also include information on the following:

    * Objectives of the project;
    * Source of funding;
    * Number of users of the services;
    * Income levels of the beneficiaries;
    * Innovative approach (technical or organizational).

2. Press cutting, videotapes and photographs are welcome.
(*Please note that these will **not** be returned.*)

3. Please limit the nominations to three and give in order of preference.

Nominated by (person/organization):

Address:

Telephone:

Telex:

Telefax:

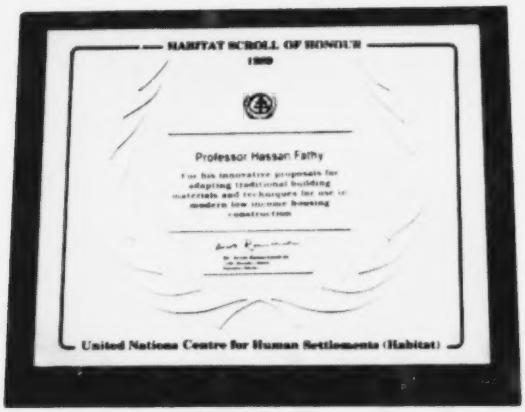
Full cable address:

When completed, please send this form **to arrive not later than 22 July 1994** to:

Habitat Scroll of Honour 1994
Information, Audio-Visual and Documentation Division
UNCHS (Habitat)
P.O. Box 30030
Nairobi
KENYA
Fax: (254 2) 664266/7

UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Habitat)

HABITAT SCROLL OF HONOUR



Award for outstanding contributions towards human settlements development.

1994 Nomination form for **INDIVIDUALS or ORGANIZATIONS**

Name of individual:

Profession/Occupation:

OR

Name of Organization:

Personal address:

Telephone:

Organization/Employer's address:

Telephone:

Telefax: Telex:

Full cable address:

Nationality:..... Sex (circle): **F** **M**

Age category: Under 21, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, Over 60

Action Area(s) of Human Settlements Development:
(*See list of categories in attached selection criteria*)

Human Settlements Achievement(s)

1. Please attach a summary of about 300 words on a single sheet of A4-paper, including dates and places of achievement(s) and activities.

2. Press cutting, videotapes and photographs are welcome.
(*Please note that these will **not** be returned. UNCHS (Habitat) will request further information about the individual or organization, if necessary).*

3. Please limit the nominations to three and give in order or preference.

Nominated by (person/organization):

Address:

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KENYA
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World Habitat Day
Monday, 3 October 1994

FOREWORD

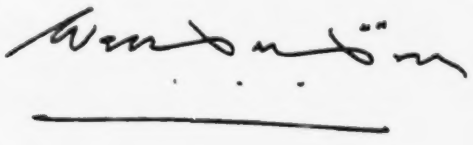
In this International Year of the Family, UNCHS (Habitat) has chosen the theme **Home and the Family** as the focus of World Habitat Day, to be observed on Monday 3 October. While the family is the basic unit of society, the home offers the spatial location for the well-being and development of families.

During the last two decades, more and more families all over the world have experienced increasing deterioration in their physical living conditions. Although every family has a right to adequate shelter, the number of families without homes has been on the increase. Today the living conditions of more than a billion people are characterized by the lack of adequate shelter, absence of clean water, inadequate sanitation and a dearth of facilities for waste disposal. The widespread lack of educational and health facilities compounds the situation, severely impairing the quality of life for millions of families and limiting their ability to participate in the development process.

One major force that has contributed to the increasing deterioration of living conditions is rapid urbanization, particularly acute in the developing countries. At least 600 million urban dwellers in developing countries are estimated to live in "life- and health threatening" situations. The grim face of poverty is nowhere more visible than in the burgeoning slums and squatter settlements of cities; in future decades, the face of poverty will become increasingly urban.

This media kit is produced with the hope of heightening awareness of the deteriorating living conditions facing millions of families around the globe. The articles that follow highlight various issues such as the importance of women's role in the family, the home as a workplace, housing concerns of the elderly and the disabled, and the growing number of street children worldwide. Also included are some helpful definitions, a fact sheet, selected quotations and an article on the 1996 Habitat II Conference, viewed by many as a broad spectrum opportunity, perhaps a last chance, to address the deepening crisis facing human settlements.

I hope this media kit will be put to good use by media practitioners, indeed by everyone concerned about deteriorating living conditions worldwide. By highlighting these issues, it is hoped that appropriate action will follow, from each and every quarter and at whatever scale, to alleviate this intolerable situation.



Wally N'Dow
Assistant-Secretary-General
UNCHS (Habitat)

World Habitat Day
Monday, 3 October 1994

THE MEANING OF HOME

"We create our homes, but then they create us."
---Winston Churchill

Gautama Buddha, the ancient sage and philosopher, once described shelter as "the root of happiness", perhaps because he knew that without a home, human beings cannot fully develop emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

The home is the first place where human beings learn to establish relations among themselves, with society and with their environment. As aptly pointed out by a homeless Pakistan man recently, "A house is not just a place to eat and sleep in. It gives me an identity. In my house, I can socialise, I can ask my friends over and I can be proud. Without this, I am not human but just an animal."

The home, therefore, is not just a physical space where certain activities are performed; it is a value-laden symbol of warmth, security and identity. Physically and symbolically, the home is (supposed to be) a refuge where one can share with loved ones and retreat from the pressures of the world. It is a place for being with one's family and for sharing feelings. It is a private place where one can love, laugh, cry, quarrel, reconcile, dream and plan without fear. The home, as the English might put it, is one's castle.

The home is so intimately linked with our sense of selfhood or identity that the mere idea of home evokes in us a strong sense of belonging. It is often viewed as a haven, a place to care about, the core of our existence. It could be a bed, a room, a street, a neighbourhood or even a country. It could be an oasis in the middle of a desert or a dry patch under a bridge. But no matter what our definition of home, it is a part of who we are. "Your home," as Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran said, "is your larger body."

Although home is a relative term which can mean different things to different people, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) defines home in terms of whether or not it is "adequate" -- that is, whether it meets basic requirements of tenurial security,

structural stability and infrastructural support and whether it has convenient access to employment and community services.

Similarly, the National Campaign for Housing Rights in India defines the home as a place where one is "able to live with dignity in social, legal and environmental security and with adequate access to essential housing resources like land, building materials, water, fuel, fodder as well as civic services and finance".

The "enabling approach" propagated by the United Nations Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 recognises that housing is not so important for what it IS but for what it DOES for its inhabitants. Hence, apart from being a physically and environmentally safe place to live in and raise children in, the home derives its value from whether or not it has access to infrastructure such as water, schools, roads etc. which enable its inhabitants to perform other essential tasks such as work and education.

However, the dream of a decent, safe and affordable home remains just that -- a dream -- for almost a quarter of humanity. It is estimated that over one billion people are inadequately housed; of these more than 100 million are absolutely homeless. A vast majority reside in the developing countries.

For these "wretched of the earth", home is a dangerous place where death and disease are constant companions; a place where the price of a warm bed is paid through enduring years of violence and sexual abuse; a place where the fear of bulldozers forces people to "sleep with one ear open". For them, home is a dream which quickly turns into a nightmare.

World Habitat Day
Monday, 3 October 1994

WHY HOUSING IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

Meena, a ten-year-old girl who lives in one of Bombay's larger slums, sits on the edge of an open drain, trying to decipher the words in a school book under the flickering gaze of a neon light. This is the only place where she can study as there is no electricity in her home and no space either. Her parents, two sisters and a brother share a dark, smelly room in a row of shacks where women wait till nightfall to answer the call of nature as there are no enclosed latrines in the neighbourhood. Because her parents are always arguing about money, Meena and her brother and sisters have taken to doing odd jobs in the neighbourhood. This has severely affected their education. Meena now goes to school only when she can, which is about twice a week. Since her mother fell ill two weeks ago, Meena has not stepped inside a classroom. Her mother says she must stay at home to help with the housework. But Meena likes to read and escapes to the bright spot under the neon sign whenever she can.

If someone were to suggest to Meena that she has the right to privacy or the right to recreation, she might laugh at the idea. The only privacy she gets is when her mother leaves her at home alone to take care of her two-year-old brother. As for recreation, she doesn't know the meaning of the word.

Meena's case is just one example of why it is meaningless to talk of housing rights without addressing other economic, social and cultural rights such as: the right to privacy and family life; the right to be free from any form of discrimination; the rights of the child; the right to freedom of movement; the right to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; the rights of assembly and association; the right to property and land; and the rights of women -- all of which have a direct impact on the home and the family.

The interdependence and indivisibility of all rights are a long-accepted principle. In reality, this means that respect for civil and political rights cannot be separated from the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and, on the other hand, that genuine economic and social development cannot occur without political and civil freedoms.

The right to adequate housing is one of the economic, social and cultural rights to have gained

increasing attention and promotion among human rights bodies. For instance, Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) recognises the right of everyone to "an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including food, clothing and housing, and the continuous improvement of living conditions".

Children's rights contained in many human rights instruments also acknowledge the importance of adequate housing as a prerequisite to healthy development of the child. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child states: "The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical facilities."

Women's rights are also closely connected to the right to housing. Globally, one third of the world's households are headed by women. But women have hardly any say in the legislation, planning and management of housing, even though they spend far more time at home than men do, performing tasks such as cooking, cleaning and raising children. Denial of property and land rights to women means that women cannot improve their economic situation (for instance, by obtaining loans using land as collateral) and their resultant poverty has a direct impact on the quality of care they provide to their families.

Yet as important as adequate housing is to the development of the family, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) estimates that throughout the world over one billion people live in inadequate housing, with in excess of 100 million people living in conditions classified as homelessness.

In addition, millions of people around the globe are made homeless by forced evictions which adversely affect families and family life. The constant fear of eviction also negatively affects the emotional health of the family.

UNCHS has been actively promoting the right to housing as a basic human right. This process began with the implementation of the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements issued in 1976, followed by the proclamation of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (1987) and the adoption of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly in 1988.

The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987 facilitated the raising of public awareness about housing and related problems still prevalent throughout the world. The following year, the Global Strategy for Shelter (GSS) propelled housing issues forward and

resulted in housing rights being placed more prominently than ever before on the human rights agenda of the United Nations.

The right to adequate housing forms a cornerstone of the Global Strategy:

"The right to adequate housing is universally recognised by the community of nations...All nations, without exception, have some form of obligation in the shelter sector, as exemplified by their creation of housing ministries or housing agencies, by their allocation of funds to the housing sector, and by their policies, programmes and projects...All citizens of all States, poor as they may be, have a right to expect their Governments to be concerned about their shelter needs, and to accept a fundamental obligation to protect and improve houses and neighbourhoods, rather than damage or destroy them."

Adequate housing is defined within the Global Strategy as meaning: adequate privacy, adequate space, adequate security, adequate lighting and ventilation, adequate basic infrastructure and adequate location with regard to work and basic facilities -- all at a reasonable cost.

The question of what an "adequate" house is and whether governments have the resources to make housing available to all its citizens is an extremely complex one. The Netherlands-based Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions, an affiliate of Habitat International Coalition (HIC), has attempted to address this issue by emphasising that housing rights have more to do with political will than with the logistics of actually providing housing to people. They say that while the physical structure of the house, the infrastructure and facilities around it and security of tenure are important issues, they are largely dependent on whether land is affordable, available and accessible, whether cheap building materials are available, whether people are protected against evictions and whether people have the right to choose where they want to live -- all of which, in turn, depend on whether governments make these conditions possible.

No doubt, economic factors play a large part in determining whether or not housing rights are realised. Rates of inflation, interest rates, structural readjusment measures, income levels and distribution, and systems of taxation all affect the degree to which housing rights can become a reality. But governments have to play their part as well.

International housing policy-makers, including UNCHS, believe that any attempt to improve housing conditions must rely largely on "self-help" initiatives or what is known as the "enabling approach", which forms the basis of the Global Strategy. In short, the enabling

approach encourages national governments to establish the right legislative, institutional and financial framework that will enable the formal and informal private business sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), communities and individual households to contribute most effectively to shelter development.

Many governments, however, are still resistant to the idea that the right to housing is a right for everyone. Their ambivalence is exemplified by the fact that the poor are routinely evicted by governments, local authorities or private landowners in many countries both industrialized and developing. They often see investment in housing and infrastructure as a waste of scarce resouces and believe that the problem of inadequate housing and homelessness will be solved as the country develops.

However, development is dependent on the physical and mental health of people. People who sleep on streets or who live in unhygienic and overcrowded homes cannot fully develop emotionally, intellectually, economically, culturally or as a family. In fact, inadequate and insecure shelter can lead to social and political instability which eventually hampers economic development.

The right to housing must therefore be seen as a public policy priority issue and adequate financial, physical, institutional and human resources must be allocated so as to never compromise this right.

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THE HOMELESS

"To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognised need of the human soul."
--Simone Weil, The Need for Roots

A park bench, a pavement, a tin shanty, a cardboard box, a bridge, a piece of plastic sheeting supported by a stick. These are some of the things that almost 100 million people in cities and towns around the world call "home".

Most of the world's homeless live in developing countries. Recent statistics indicate that the homeless and the inadequately housed comprise almost HALF the inhabitants in large cities in developing countries. For example, a recent analysis suggests that 66 per cent of every Indian city with more than one million people will be homeless by the year 2000. Similarly, in Mexico City, the world's most populous city, almost half the population lives in some form of uncontrolled or unauthorised settlement and in Alexandria, Egypt, it is estimated that 70 per cent of the population lives in slums or squatter settlements.

War and civil strife is also a leading cause of homelessness, especially in Africa. Statistics show that 28 African countries are either producers or recipients of refugees, or both. Seventy-five per cent of the world's refugees are found in Africa -- where armed conflicts, economic deterioration, environmental degradation including floods and drought, systematic human rights abuses and ethnic and religious strife have all contributed to increasing uprootedness among the population. Almost 80 per cent of refugees, internally displaced people and returnees in the continent are women and their children.

The number of homeless is also growing in industrialized countries. Recent statistics indicate that more than one million people in Western Europe are without homes; in the United States of America, the National Coalition for the Homeless, an NGO, estimates that between three and five million people are without permanent homes on any given night.

The nature of homelessness in industrialized countries is also changing. More and more families, mostly women and their children, are among the homeless. For example, in the

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 1989, over 400,000 people, including 196,000 children, were officially classified as homeless; 40 per cent were single-parent families with children. It is believed that the actual number of homeless could be twice as high considering that many homeless people are drifters who never stay in one place long enough to become part of any official statistic.

Family breakdown is a leading cause of homelessness in industrialized countries. According to a recent report published by the World Young Women's Christian Association (W/YWCA), "shelters for women are filled to capacity with pregnant and runaway teenagers, battered and abused women and children, women who have been institutionalised and older women. Others sleep "rough" in city streets, abandoned cars, "squats" and in the homes of friends or relatives...domestic violence and a breakdown in traditional family structures are strong contributing factors to homelessness."

Although family breakdown has been blamed for the increasing homelessness in cities across Europe and North America, experts say that homelessness is a symptom of every other social ill in society such as drugs, crime, poverty, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, violence and even the decline of compassion in an increasingly individualistic society. At a housing estate in England, for instance, family stress due to unemployment led many young people to leave home and live "rough" on the streets. Officials of the YWCA found many young women drifting aimlessly in the community, carrying their belongings in plastic bags, all unemployed and many of them pregnant.

Because self-help or cooperative projects are virtually non-existent in industrialized countries, and the amount of low-income, government-subsidised housing is shrinking due to rising construction costs, the problem of homelessness is likely to become more acute in the future.

In the developing countries, family breakdown is a contributory cause of homelessness, but its significance pales in relation to the much larger issue of rural stagnation, which is the main cause of homelessness in cities. Drought, famine, unemployment and poverty in rural areas force people to migrate to cities where the living conditions may be deplorable but where they can at least find work. Bombay, for instance, receives 200 migrants from rural areas every day. Economists believe that government failure to give agriculture a viable economic dimension and the inability of the rural landless to survive especially when the rains fail are the main catalysts for exodus to the city.

The poor thus migrate to cities in search of employment opportunities. Failing to get the desired jobs in the formal sector immediately, many migrants take up whatever jobs are

available, which are mostly in the informal sector and not very remunerative. Many live on pavements or move into already crowded slums where they are forced to live on the edge of insecurity, illegality and invisibility.

Even though the labour of migrants is needed to build the city, their presence in the city is seen as an intrusion. As V.S. Naipaul, the Trinidad-born novelist, once noted: "The poor are needed as hands, as labour; but the city was not built to accommodate them."

Since most lack a permanent address or an official identity, their access to public resources is also limited. Because the homeless urban poor are forced to live in a state of "illegality" and "invisibility" (since many governments will not recognise their "right" to be there), infrastructure and other services which are provided to other residents of the city are not available to them. And because local authorities do not recognise their "right" to be in the city, they are constantly under threat of eviction.

Urban poor families are thus pushed into a spiral of problems. Demolitions and evictions affect family finances; as family finances dwindle, women and children are forced to work in the informal sector where they are further exploited; and since much informal work can be done from home, there is increased pressure on household space which is already limited.

Many countries are now beginning to realise that "slums are here to stay" and that the best approach in dealing with them is by providing sites-and-service upgrading schemes to them or providing slum-dwellers with alternative land. However, plans to resettle the homeless often fail because the alternative site is usually outside the city limits where the homeless refuse to live because it is too far from their place of work and entails spending more money on transport or spending more time walking to work. Sometimes, governments have no choice but to sell off public land to squatters. In Karachi, Pakistan, for instance, the Government has been supporting programmes to give tenure to almost two million squatters who live in settlements on public land.

Government involvement combined with self-help community initiatives can help solve the problem of homelessness, with a little push from the private sector. The Global Strategy for Shelter, whose main objective is to facilitate the provision of "shelter for all" by the year 2000, encourages the application of "enabling policies" whereby national governments are encouraged to establish the right legislative, institutional and financial framework that will enable the formal and informal private-business sector, NGOs, communities and individual households to contribute most effectively to shelter development.

Already many organisations are using the "enabling approach" to solve the problem of

homelessness. In London, United Kingdom, homeless people are reclaiming some measure of dignity by distributing **The Big Issue**, a self-help newspaper for the homeless, written by the homeless and sold by the homeless. Based on a New York prototype, **The Big Issue** was launched by a group of private businesses in the late 1980s and is now a successful, profitable business which earns homeless vendors about $US130 each per week. It is estimated that since the launch of the newspaper, begging on the streets of London has been reduced by as much as 40 per cent.

In Bombay, the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) has organised women who live on the pavements to help them lobby for their rights. SPARC began its work with families living in the hovels on the pavements of Bombay in 1984. By starting with what it saw as the most vulnerable group, it hopes to develop a methodology that will set in motion a process that over the long term will improve the position of the city's most marginalised groups.

And in Sri Lanka, UNCHS, in collaboration with the Danida Community Development Programme, has helped poor families improve their living conditions by encouraging them to participate fully in development projects. Through individual and collective participation, poor families are thus influencing the direction of public works programmes. In an agreement with the Sri Lankan Government, families in poor urban communities are contracted to construct and maintain the physical infrastructure of their neighbourhood, including footpaths, drains, wells and sanitation facilities. In this way, families benefit not only through being employed and paid to carry out these contracts, but they also gain hands-on experience in managing the affairs of their own living environment. By accepting power and responsibility, they are thus able to determine the priorities of development projects.

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WOMEN'S ROLE IN SUSTAINING THE HOME AND THE FAMILY

On a typical day, Njeri, a plantation worker in the highlands of Kenya, wakes up at 4 a.m., cleans the house, prepares breakfast for her husband and children and then leaves for the plantation at 8 a.m. She works there till 5 p.m., taking a short break every 2-3 hours to nurse the baby she has brought with her. On her way back home, she collects firewood and, if necessary, drinking water. When she gets home, she cooks the evening meal, bathes and feeds the children and tends to the animals. When her husband arrives, she heats the food and when he is finished, finally sits down to eat herself. At 11 p.m., she goes to bed.

Njeri is not alone. All over the world, women's work keeps the home and the family alive. Women are not only the unacknowledged backbone of the family economy, they are also the "mobile infrastructure" which sustains the home and the family.

Women perform survival tasks which are essential to home and family life. In addition to childbearing and rearing, women -- through necessity rather than design -- are primarily responsible for growing food, providing water, gathering fuel and earning an income -- tasks which are arduous and time-consuming.

In most developing countries, women form the majority of agricultural labour; in Africa, for instance, they account for 80 per cent of agricultural production. The supply of water and fuel -- vital for the health of the family -- is also almost exclusively the concern of women. In rural areas in developing countries, women spend an average of 4 hours daily collecting water. Fuelwood collection, where it is not commercialised, can take even longer, depending on the ecological characteristics of the region. In the foothills of the Himalayas, for instance, gathering of firewood and fodder can take up a whole day.

Cooking, washing and other domestic activities also consume a large proportion of women's time. A study conducted in Peru found that women spend an average of 4 hours cooking and preparing food. Yet women in many cultures are often the last in the family to eat and they often eat less than other family members.

Women also contribute to the family budget. This applies not only to cases where the male breadwinner has died or has divorced the woman, but also to cases where men have migrated to cities, mines, plantations or abroad. A survey, published in "Women: A World Report" by Debbie Taylor et al., shows that the percentage of female-headed households in sub-Saharan Africa is already 22 per cent; in the Caribbean area 20 per cent; in India about 19 per cent; in the Far East and North Africa 16 per cent and in Latin America 15 per cent. These figures can go up to 45 per cent in certain Latin American and African countries. Even where the woman is not the sole breadwinner, her contribution to the family budget is of utmost importance, the more so because women spend more of their income on family welfare.

Women are also increasingly taking on the role of community managers. When basic services are lacking, it is women who are forced to take on responsibilities such as refuse collection and communal childcare. In instances where the State or the local authority threatens squatters and other low-income groups with eviction, it is women who are in the front-line in the struggle against forced evictions and for regularisation of tenure.

Yet despite women's essential role in the sustenance of the home and the family, women have little or no control in the planning or management of their environment, which includes the home and the family. Women represent one half of the world's population, one third of the official labour force, yet receive only one per cent of the world's income and own less than one per cent of the world's property. They have little access to and control over land, credit, education and training.

Women, often being the poorest among the poor, are also least likely to benefit from housing schemes because many projects target groups who are in a position to make repayments. Because most low-income women are in jobs with no legal status or protection, they do not qualify for assistance in such schemes. Moreover, down-payment requirements and application procedures inadvertently affect women negatively who, because of illiteracy and other social factors, are not in a position to comply.

Women who head households find it even more difficult to improve their housing situation because they not only tend to be poorer than men who head households, but they also lack time and skills to build and finance their housing. Often they are unable to secure loans because of problems such as lack of information about credit programmes, low and irregular incomes, lack of collateral, complicated loan application procedures, discrimination on the part of male bureaucrats and high interest rates.

In many customary law situations, women have no right to own land except through a male relative. Even societies where women have the right to own and inherit land, their general

low economic status means that they are unable to afford land. Also, most developing countries have a long history of colonial rule which imposed laws and social structures which were particularly harmful to women. For example, inheritance laws and communal rights to land which once allowed women access to land have been replaced by title deed systems which restricts land ownership to individual men.

This has several implications for women and their families: without rights to land, women are often unable to protect themselves and their children against unstable or violent domestic situations. Moreover, without access to land rights, women are unable to use it as collateral to gain access to credit, which may help them improve their family's economic situation.

Policy-makers, planners, architects and designers routinely ignore women's needs, particularly in the urban planning context. In a draft document commissioned by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) in 1985, Caroline Moser found that lack of recognition that women have productive income-earning roles means that planners and architects fail to take into account the fact that women's work as producers differs from those of men both spatially and in the type of employment they undertake.

For example, architects rarely design homes to accommodate income-generating activities. They rarely consider the fact that low-income women may wish to use house space to run a small business such as a shop from a front room, in which case a large room with ample storage space may be desirable. In some cultures where women are by tradition confined indoors, a verandah or open courtyard is essential for simultaneously carrying out household tasks, such as washing and drying, with child-minding and income-generating activities. In a squatter-settlement upgrading project in Tunis, failure to recognise the importance of courtyards and verandahs in women's lives resulted in psychological depression and even suicide among women.

Gender-insensitive design and planning can be financially costly too. A housing campaign in the United Republic of Tanzania which tried to persuade people to replace their traditional houses with relatively expensive modern dwellings failed miserably because the new houses forced families to live together as an integrated unit (wives, sons, aging parents and so on) which went against traditional African notions of privacy and autonomy. (In most African societies, it is inconceivable for adult or teenage sons and parents to sleep "under the same roof".) Similarly, in a Central American project, women would not use the toilets built and designed by male engineers because a gap had been left at the bottom of the wall which exposed their feet and offended notions of privacy.

Moser believes that women's housing needs cannot be achieved by simply grafting on

"women" as a category to existing policies. She feels that fundamental changes in attitude towards traditional stereotypes are required before a gender-aware approach can be reached, that is, "an approach capable of acknowledging that women have different housing NEEDS from men".

The UNCHS Women in Human Settlements Development Programme has already initiated a comprehensive programme of action to address the particular problems of women in the area of shelter and human settlements development. The basic objective of the Programme is to promote women's equal participation in the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and all human settlements development, and to mainstream gender issues in its various new and on-going programmes, projects and activities. The Programme also supports governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) in their commitment to a process of training and organisational development which foster gender awareness, gender sensitivity and gender competence among their staff.

Several NGOs and CBOs are already involved in projects specifically directed towards women's shelter needs. A number of credit programmes have been established. Examples include SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) in India which has over 13,000 members, 90 per cent of whom are illiterate; the Women in Development Loan Fund in Barbados (where 43 per cent of all households are female-headed) and the African Co-operative Savings and Credit Association in Kenya (which attempts to encourage government bodies to promote women's participation in credit unions).

Many projects are also actively seeking to train women in construction skills. In Jamaica, the Women's Construction Collective has trained young unemployed women in building skills and has even found them jobs in the construction industry. And in Panama, a government-sponsored project helped 100 women build their own houses in 1981 by providing land, building materials, training and a small monthly wage. By minimising labour costs and bringing new skills to the participants, the scheme appears to have served both the Government and the women well.

The availability of statistics and indicators which quantify the specific constraints women face in relation to men can change public perception and hence, policies. Such statistics and indicators are now being developed by UNCHS in collaboration with communities, NGOs and local governments in 9 different countries : Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. It is hoped eventually that more national governments and international agencies will gather data which will form a sound basis for the formulation and implementation of gender-aware housing policies.

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THE FAMILY

The Collins English dictionary defines family as "parents, children and servants as making a household; the children of the same parents; descendants of one common ancestor".

Clearly, the definition of family varies from culture to culture. In most Western cultures, the family unit usually consists of father, mother and all their children -- the nuclear family. (However, social factors such as divorce, domestic violence and changing social mores have given rise to more and more single parents, 90 per cent of whom are women.)

In other cultures, particularly in Asia, the family unit includes not only parents and their children but also uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins, otherwise known as extended families.

Then there are cultures where the concept of family is not so clear cut. For example, in Swahili, the term "family" in the sense of a limited group does not exist. In fact, it has been necessary to take the English term and turn it into a Swahili form *familia*. This is because the word family, as it is currently used, is too narrow to adequately define the complexity of African society.

For example, most definitions of family are based on the premise that all family members live together under one roof where one male is the head of the family or are closely bounded units in the form of households. This vision of the family does not apply to most African societies where each family member lives separately in a family homestead and where relationships between fathers and sons, between brothers, between co-wives and their husband and between sisters and brothers do not adhere to a clear-cut hierarchical pattern.

Nonetheless, the family, no matter what its definition, is of utmost importance to human progress. As a social unit, the family should ideally contribute to the psychological growth of its members. (This is not always the case, however. Domestic violence and child abuse are on the increase worldwide. For example, data from many industrialized and developing countries reveal that anywhere between one fifth and more than one half of women have been

beaten by their partners.)

As an economic unit, the family is a crucial cog in the developmental wheel of a nation. In many countries, women and children perform tasks which directly or indirectly contribute to the family economy and to the economy of the country as a whole. Increasing family breakdown also affects the mental and physical health of a country, which can eventually hamper economic development.

And homes, where families enjoy togetherness and protection from the elements, are singular in their contribution to the growth and well-being of their members. It is to focus on these issues and to stimulate public opinion with a view to finding urgent solutions that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has chosen "Home and the Family" as the theme for this year's World Habitat Day. Perhaps no other theme would have been more appropriate in this International Year of the Family.

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SELECTED QUOTES

- *"To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognised need of the human soul."*

  --Simone Weil, **The Need for Roots**

- *"We create our homes, but then they create us."*

  --Winston Churchill, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

- *"Shelter is the root of happiness."*

  -- Gautama Buddha, c. 500 BC

- *"Your house is your larger body. It grows in the sun and sleeps in the stillness of night; and it is not dreamless."*

  -- Khalil Gibran, Lebanese poet

- *"Life's aspirations come in the guise of children."*

  -- Rabindranath Tagore

World Habitat Day
Monday, 3 October 1994

DEFINITION OF AN ADEQUATE HOUSE

An "adequate house" is one which meets the following criteria:

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE: an adequate house must give protection from the elements: it must not be damp or unfit for habitation and must be culturally acceptable.

THE SITE ON WHICH IT IS BUILT: a house must guarantee the physical safety of its occupants. It must be a secure and safe place to be, to live, to raise children and be healthy.

THE INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES SUPPLIED TO IT: an adequate house must have certain facilities essential for health, comfort and nutrition. These include safe and sufficient supplies of water, the provision of household and human waste removal, facilities for washing, cooking and food storage, and heating where needed. It must also include access to certain public services such as emergency life-saving services (e.g., fire fighting and ambulances).

AFFORDABILITY: an adequate house must be made available at such a cost that it does not result in the threatened or actual deprivation of other basic needs of all sectors in society.

THE LOCATION: an adequate house must be in a location which allows access to employment, health services, schools and other social facilities. This is true in cities and rural areas since the cost in time and public transport to and from work is often a major constraint on the budgets of poor households.

LEGAL SECURITY OF TENURE: an adequate house must have security of tenure. This pertains to owner-occupiers concerning their rights as property owners, their right to privacy etc., and to security of tenure for those who "hire" space to live, i.e., the legal rights of renters and tenants. Legal security of tenure must also be applicable to squatters as a means to prevent forced evictions, and security to leave possessions, in terms of protection from landlords, governments and others who might want to expropriate property.

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
"Definition of an Adequate House"

World Habitat Day
Monday, 3 October 1994

DEFINITION AND CONTENTS OF THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

(a) The right to housing is not limited to houses; it refers to habitat as a whole, which has cultural, historical, social, economic, political, legal, environmental, physical and territorial implications.

(b) This right is a lifelong right and its implementation must reflect and allow for the changing needs of people over their lifetimes.

(c) This right incorporates the respect for cultural identities of the different social groups in any local, national and international context.

(d) The defence of the right to housing does not mean the defence of any type of land-tenure regime but it does imply the defence of the right to enjoy with dignity and permanency a vital space and to guarantee the occupation of an adequate space to achieve fulfilment with privacy and security.

(e) To ensure the feasibility of this right for everyone, housing must be affordable, accessible and removed from the speculative markets. This aspect includes components such as access to resources and services: land, building materials, infrastructural services; as well as social and legal security of tenure; safety, healthy and culturally-accepted environment; and adequate economic and financial conditions.

(f) Housing rights include:

(i) the right not to be socially or economically segregated.

(ii) the right to determine and choose where and how one settles and lives.

(iii) the right to be protected from evictions and from demolition of housing.

(iv) the right to know and be informed about one's housing rights and truth about all factors which could influence the free choice of where to live.

(v) the right to have access to professional know-how.

(vi) the right to benefit from technological developments in terms of technical processes regarding production, distribution and consumption of building components of housing.

(vii) the right to control one's living environment and housing situation and thus to participate at all levels in the planning and implementation of housing and urban and regional development policies.

(viii) the right to organise, associate and assemble without hindrance from the state. NGOs and CBOs must be allowed to freely assist people with the realisation of their right to housing.

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FACT SHEET

Over a billion people -- almost a quarter of humanity -- are inadequately housed; of these, more than 100 million are absolutely homeless.

The majority of homeless live in developing countries but homelessness is a problem in industrialised countries too. More than a million people in Western Europe are without homes; in the United States of America, the National Coalition for the Homeless, a non-governmental organization (NGO), estimates that between three to five million people are without permanent homes on any given night.

Family breakdown is a leading cause of homelessness in industrialised countries. More and more families, mostly women and their children, are among the homeless. For example in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 1989, over 400,000 people, including 196,000 children, were officially classified as homeless; 40 per cent were single-parent families with children.

The homeless and inadequately housed comprise almost half the inhabitants in large cities in developing countries. For example, it is estimated that 70 per cent of the population of Alexandria, Egypt, lives in slums and squatter settlements; in Delhi, India, and Mexico city, Mexico, the equivalent percentage is about 60 per cent.

Rural stagnation is the main cause of homelessness in cities in developing countries. Drought, famine, unemployment and poverty in rural areas force people to migrate to cities where the living conditions may be deplorable, but where migrant families can at least find work. Bombay, for instance, receives 200 migrants from rural areas every day.

According to a 1990 report released by the World Health Organisation, 1.2 billion people in developing countries do not have access to drinking water and 1.8 billion people live without access to adequate sanitation.

Women represent one half of the world's population, one third of the official labour force yet receive only one per cent of the world,s income and own less than one per cent of the world's property.

An estimated 20-35 per cent of the world's households are headed by women. A recent survey shows that the percentage of female-headed households in sub-Saharan Africa is already 22 per cent; in the Caribbean 20 per cent; in India about 19 per cent; in East Asia and North Africa 16 per cent and in Latin America 15 per cent. In certain African and Latin American cities, the percentage can be as high as 45.

In rural areas in developing countries, women spend an average of 4 hours per day collecting water. Fuelwood collection, where it is not commercialised, can take even longer, depending on the ecological characteristics of the region. In the foothills of the Himalayas, for instance, gathering of firewood and fodder can take up a whole day.

Three quarters of the world's 18 million refugees are found in Africa -- where armed conflicts, economic deterioration, environmental degradation including floods and droughts, systematic human rights abuses and ethnic and religious strife have all contributed to increasing uprootedness among the population. Almost 80 per cent of refugees, internally displaced people and returnees in the continent are women and their children.

It is estimated that nearly half of the world's population will live in urban centres by the year 2000. Currently 2.4 billion people, representing 48 per cent of the world's population, live in urban areas. About one third of this group live in informal settlements with poor housing and inadequate or no services.

At least 600 million people living in urban areas of developing countries live in what might be termed life- and health-threatening homes and neighbourhoods. Women and children are the most severely affected since they spend the most time at home. It is estimated that 70 million women and children suffer from severe respiratory and other health problems brought about by intense indoor pollution from cooking fires.

After food, housing is the largest item in a poor family's monthly expenditure (33 per cent globally; 45 to 50 per cent in some African and Latin American countries).

Childhope, an NGO established to defend the rights of street children worldwide, estimates that there are more than 100 million children living on the streets of cities around the world.

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THE HOME AS A WORKPLACE

Until the nineteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution transformed the structure of society in Europe, home was a place where families worked. As the family was the basic unit of production, there was no real split between home and work and between male and female workplaces. Houses were small and rather than existing as a separate activity, housework was integrated with the overall work of the family. Childcare was not a separate activity, but was carried on while working and often shared with other members of the family.

All this changed with industrialization. Men's work shifted from the home to the factory while women's work remained at home. The nature of work was also transformed: men became dominant in the public sphere of the marketplace, public institutions and political influence while women were viewed as "belonging" in the private domestic sphere of the home and the neighbourhood.

The new emphasis on a separate private sphere with its focus on domesticity gave birth to the term "housewife" which signified the interconnection between women, marriage and the home. And as the sole breadwinners, men became heads of the family. Consequently, women's participation in the public sphere -- whether in work outside the home or in public life -- came to be viewed as unnatural and disruptive of family life.

This view of the "ideal family" however, did not apply to the rest of the world, where women's economic role remained crucial. In Africa, for instance, women were, and still are responsible for 80 per cent of agricultural production.

The idea of a nuclear family with the male as the sole breadwinner is also crumbling in modern-day Europe and North America. According to the 1991 *Human Development Report*, 10 per cent of households in Finland are headed by a single parent, the vast majority of whom are women. Female-headed households are becoming more common in the rest of the world too. Globally, it is estimated that 20-35 per cent of households are female-headed.

Nonetheless, the myth of a sexually-segregated public-private dichotomy is fundamental to

capitalist societies and is reinforced by most urban planners and designers. For example, the public-private dichotomy has created legislation which clearly demarcates commercial areas from residential ones. Zoning legislation, a legacy of colonial rule in many countries across Asia and Africa, prevents the development of income-earning activities in residential areas by deeming such activities "illegal".

This is particularly problematic for women, especially low-income women, many of whom are informal-sector workers operating from home. Such legislation is not only outdated but impractical. For instance, in a sites-and-services project in Nairobi, project regulations stated that the land and house could only be used for residential purposes. However, despite attempts by the authorities to enforce a strict separation between residential and business activities and constant threat and harassment from the City Commission, 48 per cent of women continued to operate small enterprises such as selling vegetables or charcoal from their homes.

Because women have to combine domestic work with income generation, they are more likely to work nearer home, from home or part-time. Lack of recognition that women have productive income-earning roles means that their economic functions are often invisibilized, says Caroline Moser in a draft document on gender planning commissioned by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in 1985. As a result, in the planning of settlements and the design of houses, planners and architects fail to take into account the fact that the work patterns of women as producers differ from men's both spatially and in the type of employment they undertake.

For example, women's work patterns are rarely considered in the planning of urban services. In Belo Horizonte, Brazil, it was found that urban transport services were organized in favour of men's employment needs, that is, at peak morning and evening hours to take the male workforce to their jobs. Many buses were withdrawn during the daytime which meant that women had to wait longer for buses and hence had to spend more time doing things such as collecting children from school, shopping, visiting the clinic or getting to their own part-time jobs.

Even in the design of houses, architects rarely pay attention to the need for women to generate an income from home. Lack of consultation with women means that the design of dwelling structures is inappropriate for cottage industry or sub-letting.

The idea that home can also be a workplace in not a new one; nor is it something that is so rare that it is not worth consideration. On the contrary, informal employment -- which is often conducted from home -- is the norm rather than the exception in many countries. In Thailand,

for example, 50 per cent of people work in the informal economy; in Morocco, the figure is as high as 75 per cent.

Economists believe that the phenomenal rise of the informal or "real economy" is a result of slow overall economic growth with its failure to provide adequate wages and create employment. Others argue that developing-country manufacturing sectors are inefficient and unable to compete on world markets, that governments promote capital- rather than labour-intensive industries and that financial systems are unable to provide credit to small enterprises. Economists are also recognizing the inhibiting role governments can play through issuing entangling and complex regulations.

Clearly, a shift in development policy needs to take place to bridge the gap between the "real" (informal) and formal economies. Outdated regulations (such as zoning legislation) need to be revised to unleash the income-earning potential of informal workers. According to Mary McNeil, editor of *The Urban Age*, "innovative programmes, such as the Grameen Bank (in Bangladesh) that provides small amounts of credit to the poor (90 per cent of whom are peasant women), better information on regulatory procedures, community mobilization and more extensive training programmes are crucial to tapping into this vast resource."

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HOUSING CONCERNS OF THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED

The world's population is ageing dramatically. Declining fertility is reducing the proportion of children, while longer life expectancy is increasing the numbers of elderly people. The proportion of those 65 and older is projected to double from 5 per cent of the world population in 1950 to 10 per cent in 2025. By that date there will be over 850 million elderly people, 70 per cent of them in developing countries.

The number of disabled people is also increasing due to improved survival rates after congenital disabilities, diseases or accidents. Current estimates of their number are in the range of 500 million; some 80 per cent of them live in developing countries. A high proportion of the elderly also suffer from age-related disabilities.

This demographic double revolution has major consequences on the way human settlements are designed, managed and used -- with impacts on the individual, family and community.

Many such people have low incomes and, consequently, a low quality of life. Due to their additional needs and expenditures, they usually have a standard of living lower than that of their counterparts of equal social class living in similar neighbourhoods. No matter what part of the world they live in, their daily lives are often limited by physical or social barriers. Many human settlements are not designed or managed to meet the special needs of these groups. They are often excluded from the labour pool, the marketplace and the social networks of urban centres.

Adequate living accommodation and agreeable physical surroundings are necessary for the well-being of all. Suitable housing is even more important to the elderly and disabled, since their abodes are often the centre of all their activities. Yet as we have seen, many elderly and disabled residents live in low-quality housing. Many of them cannot afford to upgrade or maintain their homes and as a result suffer a decline in housing quality.

This is a "silent crisis" which affects not only disabled people themselves but also the economic and social development of entire societies, as a significant reservoir of human

potential often goes untapped. Advances in human rights as well as national goals for social equity have stressed the value of *all* human resources, including elderly and disabled people. They should be considered part of the development process of society and not simply as beneficiaries of it. It is important, therefore, to develop worldwide strategies to improve the living conditions of these citizens. In a society with a sense of community among its members, disabilities must concern all human beings, not just the disabled individual and the immediate family.

What can be done?

National governments should be encouraged to adopt housing policies that take into account the needs of the elderly and disabled. A living environment designed to support their functional capacities should be an integral part of national guidelines for human settlements policies and action. The living environment should be designed so as to enable elderly people to continue to live, if they so wish, in locations that are familiar to them, where their involvement in the community may be of long standing and where they will have the opportunity to lead a rich, normal and secure life. The shift from institutional to family and community care is part of a worldwide movement.

Local governments should make the city, residential neighbourhoods and dwellings accessible to such citizens. Many of the features that make the built environment accessible to and convenient for the disabled and elderly will also make it more manageable for others. Many physical barriers in the environment can be avoided at little or no cost if they are considered at the planning stage, while others can be removed without difficulty during remodeling and renovation.

By making it an express requirement that the built environment be accessible to everybody, disabled people will become increasingly more integrated into society. Governments and private groups should also foster self-reliance, mutual help and interdependence among the elderly and disabled, and sympathetic and caring attitudes towards them by fellow citizens.

The magnitude of the problems faced by these people calls for a combination of preventive and corrective measures. Long-term preventive programmes embodied in human settlements policies and plans should envision future needs and be designed to minimize their impact, while short-range corrective measures are required to meet urgent needs.

Only through such actions may the elderly and disabled play their part in the family and the community, as worthwhile and contributing members.

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STREET CHILDREN -- AN URBAN TRAGEDY

Two brushes and a few tins of shoe polish are among eleven-year- old Raju's few possessions. They help him to eke out his uncertain existence as a shoeshine boy. Terrified after being rejected by his family, he felt he had no alternative but to run away from his village to the city of Bombay to fend for himself. Homeless, he sleeps where he can -- on a railway platform, or in a shop doorway -- alone and afraid.

Worldwide, over 30 million street children like Raju now roam the cities of the world. From Bombay to Bogotá, from Lahore to Lagos, they are there in growing numbers: shining shoes, cleaning cars, scrounging or just hanging about. Ragged and unhealthy, denied education, affection and care, they are prey to every danger. They struggle to survive, by fair means or foul, rejected by the adult world.

Their names differ from country to country. In Colombia they are "gamines" (kids); in Cameroon they are "moustiques" (mosquitoes), while in East Africa they are known as "parking boys". Yet their problems are the same everywhere.

These children may endure hardship and deprivation, physical and sexual abuse -- and turn in desperation to delinquency, drug abuse, violent crime or prostitution -- social ills that thrive on the streets and exact an enormous toll from society. Another common experience of many of these deprived children is the trauma of separation from their families. Others, who may still have links to home, work to help their families cope with problems that are part of the adult world and have responsibilities beyond their years.

By the year 2000, half the world's population will be under 25. Consequently, the number of street children, partly or wholly abandoned by their families, is sure to increase by millions worldwide.

Where have these street children come from? Why is the phenomenon of homeless youth a growing social problem. The answers are complex. Many developing countries are experiencing a breakdown of traditional life in the rural areas which has led to a massive

migration to the towns. The new migrants find homes in urban shanty towns -- where poverty, together with unemployment or underemployment further weakens family bonds and the fabric of society. Families can and do break apart from physical and emotional strain.

Other destructive trends are tearing apart the fabric of urban childhood. The bonds of family life are loosening almost everywhere. Divorce or separation is becoming commonplace, child abuse is horrifyingly on the rise, while teenage pregnancy and alcoholism leave many children with an uncertain future. Wars and civil strife also bring an inevitable aftermath of orphans on the streets. In addition, street children are a consequence of an unjust world order, where 80 per cent of the population must make do with 20 per cent of the resources. Poor families, pushed into a downward spiral of deprivation, tend to remain marginalized from one generation to another. It is hard for such a family to pull itself up out of poverty.

The prospect of an increasingly embittered generation on the streets is a distinctly threatening one, which society should take stock of before it becomes out of control. Rising numbers of homeless youngsters will augment social evils that already threaten our lives. Solutions must be found for the sake of the children and for the sake of society.

To solve these problems, governments must take the lead, and at the same time give support to NGOs, community-based organizations and others involved with the rehabilitation of street children. If more support could be given to the family unit, fewer children would reach the streets. A major contribution could be made by improving housing and living conditions so that families and their children could have hope for a better tomorrow. This is why the theme "Shelter and the Family" has been chosen as the theme for World Habitat Day 1994, to focus attention on the needs of poorly housed families and their children.

Pele, the great Brazilian footballer, started life as a street child. Many homeless children lack neither talent nor ability -- only opportunity. Let us try, through better housing and living conditions, to give them that opportunity.

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HABITAT II CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON SHELTER AND URBANIZATION

At no other time in history have so many human beings lived in such appalling anguish and misery as today. The agony and despair of those who lack the basic necessities of life -- food, shelter and clothing -- cannot be quantified. Recent estimates, however, give a global figure of one billion people living below the poverty line. High population growth and rapid urbanization, both predominantly in the developing countries, have been striking characteristics of the past two decades.

More than 95 per cent of the world's population increase in the current decade will be shared by the developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. And some 90 per cent of these people will be absorbed by cities in the developing world.

In the coming decades, the face of poverty will become increasingly urban. The urban population of developing countries, estimated at 675 million in 1975, is expected to reach two billion by the year 2000, and approximately four billion by 2025. This "urbanization" of poverty will accentuate the demand for housing and other services of a quality higher than what would have been considered adequate in rural areas. A failure to meet increased expectations could have dire political and social consequences.

Yet the proper development and management of human settlements would lead to economic and social progress -- as well as environmentally sustainable development. This realization prompted the United Nations to convene a global conference to chart a new course of action: Habitat II. This conference, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996, takes its name from the famous Habitat conference of 1976, held in Vancouver. Habitat I laid the framework for meeting the problems related to human settlements and set up UNCHS (Habitat) as the United Nations body responsible for that area of development.

The Istanbul conference will identify the reasons why, despite the great promise which the first Habitat conference appeared then to hold for global human settlements development, not enough progress has been made since. In so doing, it will use new tools of analysis, and new

approaches to examine trends in social and economic development, looking at legal, institutional and policy changes and suggesting others related to human settlements management.

All these changes come in the era of human settlements as the vehicle for sustainable development. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development -- the Earth Summit - defined the proper management of human settlements as a "prerequisite to the attainment of the overall goals for sustainable development, the centrepiece of which must be the human being". Habitat II will review the human settlements component of Agenda 21, the master plan thrashed out at the Earth Summit to reconcile environmental and economic agendas.

Indeed, "sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world" and "adequate shelter for all" are the two central themes adopted for Habitat II.

The latter is the ultimate objective of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (GSS). The Conference will conduct a mid-term review of implementation of the GSS, and make recommendations for attaining its objectives by the target date. It will also give particular attention to the special needs and contributions of women and vulnerable social groups whose quality of life and participation in development have been hampered by exclusion and inequality. It will be a forum where national governments, local governments, non-governmental and community- based organizations, and entrepreneurs will meet to evaluate the present situation with all its shortcomings and the future with its tremendous potential for a better quality of life.

Partnerships are required both for planning and implementation - - for they are the only effective way to mobilize all available resources in creating the sustainable city. National government alone cannot do it. Local government alone cannot do it. Community and neighbourhoods alone cannot do it. The private sector alone cannot do it. Partnerships between citizens' groups, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local government and national government are a vital tool in meeting the goal of Habitat II: the creation of sustainable cities that are safe, healthy and humane.

Habitat II is a golden opportunity, perhaps a last chance, for international collaboration in meeting the deepening crises facing human settlements. It provides an opportunity to galvanize national and international resources, governmental and non- governmental expertise, to develop a global approach through the free flow of ideas. The preparatory process leading to the conference should culminate in an event capable of coalescing the views and commitments from all countries into one vision, one commitment and one global action programme based on consensus and constructive dedication to a common goal.

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LABOUR MIGRATION AND THE FAMILY

Fatuma Abdulkadir sits in a Karachi slum and reminisces on the day her husband left her and their two toddlers for a job in the Middle East. She then had high hopes of a decent life, having heard of many others who had become suddenly rich after securing jobs there. Fatuma's fate, however, was not to be so. Three years after his departure, Fatuma's husband has not returned home once, nor has she been able to join him. A few letters and a little money are all that she has received from him. For Fatuma, looking after their two children alone has been an endless nightmare.

Fatuma's story, however, is not an isolated one. A 1979 study in Pakistan estimated the total number of the country's emigrants to the Middle East alone to be 1.25 million, 70 per cent of them married. Certain host countries' restrictions on accompanying family members meant that about 3 million Pakistani women and children were separated from their husbands and fathers. These estimates are 15 years old and concern only one country. No recent global estimates are available.

The movement of people within and across national boundaries has been an enduring component of human history. Whatever reasons are of particular significance for a specific case, migration entails a number of complex consequences, especially for the people involved in this process: the migrant and his or her family.

Migrants usually move to improve their economic and social standing in society. This is especially true in the case of labour migrants. In many developing countries rural poverty, manifested in low agricultural incomes, low productivity and underemployment, is pushing migrants out of rural areas towards areas with greater employment opportunities. A major motive behind country-to-country migration is better-paid employment.

In Africa and much of Asia men predominate in much of rural-urban migration, while women often form the majority of short-distance, rural-rural migrants. Recently however, more women in Africa and South Asia are joining their husbands in town or independently migrating to cities. In Latin America and some Asian countries, such as the Philippines, most

rural-urban migrants are women.

Motives for migration are somewhat different for women because of social constraints on their mobility and their work. In general, economic and educational reasons are less important and family reasons more important than for men, but there are dramatic variations from one country to another. In countries such as Burkina Faso, Egypt, India, and the Sudan for example, marriage and other family considerations account for over 80 per cent of women's moves whereas in Thailand Botswana, Mexico, Nicaragua and Thailand, economic reasons are at least as important.

When an individual moves but the rest of the family remains, there are a host of possible consequences for the remaining family or household unit. Apart from the economic consequences for the remaining household, be they positive or negative, there are other serious social and psychological effects.

At the family level, migration may influence fertility by separating husbands from wives, delaying marriage, and postponing childbearing. The most commonly observed effects include personal and emotional problems married couples encounter because of physical separation. Psychiatrists point out that prolonged post- marital separation may lead to deviant sexual behaviour by both partners, resulting in guilt and tension and leading to breakups of marriages.

A study in the Indian state of Kerala shows that the entire family situation seems to be heading for breakdown in the Gulf- emigrating belts of the state. In Chavakkadu district, one of the most important emigration pockets in Kerala, nearly 60 per cent of the cases of mental illness came from families with migrants abroad. The sharing of the migrants' remittances between parents and wives is yet another bone of contention and a potential cause of family feuds and concomitant problems.

The children of migrants' families are also psychologically affected. Such children, it has been found, are becoming delinquents and are increasingly turning to alcohol and drugs. Mothers who have to take full control of the children are finding it difficult in the absence of the supporting presence of the fathers.

A study conducted in Chittagong, Bangladesh, yielded similar results; it cites increased incidence of divorce and polygamy as a direct result of migration. Although these findings are based on a limited sample, the tendencies are such as to be generally prevalent wherever substantial migration is concentrated.

Women migrants face particular problems. A study conducted in Thailand revealed that many rural women from poor backgrounds migrate to urban centres only to enter the oldest profession in the world. The study found that they are not simply escaping from the ties of the family or the low rungs of village society. Rather, they are going out to support the family, and perhaps also to improve their own position within the community. They enter into this particular trade in response to the obligations they feel they owe their family as part of a customary role as earning members of society. Many of them end up being exploited by agents and damaged by ill health.

In family situations, the apparent impossibility of combining both salaried employment and childcare has led women to sacrifice their roles as mothers in order to perform their roles as wives and economic partners. Such a migration strategy is followed by some Portuguese women in France who have left their children behind in Portugal, commonly in the care of a maternal grandmother. This strategy, also pursued by some Turkish women who precede their husbands abroad, is not without enormous emotional trials, especially for the women themselves.